65th Rochester-Finger Lakes Exhibition

At the Memorial Art Gallery from July 26-September 13, 2015
“Artist Cell Phone Tour: In Their Own Words”
Dial into the tour at 585-627-4132

Stop 1
Director’s Welcome
Jonathan Binstock, Mary W. and Donald R. Clark Director, Memorial Art Gallery

I’m Jonathan Binstock, director of the Memorial Art Gallery. Welcome to the 65th Rochester-Finger Lakes Exhibition, and to this special audio tour in the artists’ own words.

Tracing its roots back to the MAG’s early years, the Finger Lakes Exhibition showcases works by emerging and established artists from western and central New York. We are proud to continue this tradition, celebrating the creativity of our contemporary artists.

As ever, we’re grateful to our exhibition underwriters for making shows like this possible. This exhibition is sponsored by M&T Bank, with additional support provided by the Elaine P. and Richard U. Wilson Foundation, the Rubens Family Foundation, and the Margaret Davis Friedlich and Alan and Sylvia Davis Memorial Fund.

Thank you for supporting the MAG, and our area artists. We hope you enjoy this tour “in the artists own words.”

Stop 2
Tour Instructions
Patti Giordano, Chief Operating Officer, Memorial Art Gallery

Throughout the exhibition you will see several signs that indicate a cell phone audio stop. Call the telephone number listed and enter the stop number to hear the artists talk about the highlighted work. When the stop concludes, you may simply enter the next stop number, or hang up and call the tour number back when you’re ready. To interrupt a stop, press # and then the next stop number.

You also have the opportunity to share your thoughts with us about this tour, or your overall experience at the Gallery today. We encourage you to enter *0 (star 0) at any time during your tour to leave us feedback.

This cell phone tour is free, but please be aware that your normal plan minutes will apply. Thank you for visiting the Memorial Art Gallery.
Stop 3
Shamira Nicolas, 434

My name is Shamira Nicolas. The title of my work is 434. As the title of my work suggests, I use numbers to construct my paintings. I use numbers because of their simplicity, defined forms and limitations imposed on them by their sequence of 0-9. By using numbers, I create works of art that are abstract, geometric, timeless and universal. When I use numbers from different languages, the art work reflects that culture.

Stop 4
Jack Wolsky, Sefirot Series #2

My latest paintings, titled Sefirot are an extension of my Ain-Yesh statement. In this new series, I have added the Kabbalistic symbol representing the Jewish tree of life, the Sefirot image, which symbolizes the energy emanating from the Kabbalistic Tree of Life. This is all a continuation of my interest in Judaic subject matter and thought. My paintings are my attempt to objectify, through the medium of encaustics, paintings that evoke in the viewer higher states of consciousness, statements worthy of meditation and transcendent timelessness. This is the aesthetic state I am presently in. I am continuously enjoying the journey.

Stop 5
Alejandro Gutiérrez, The First Kiss

It is a defining moment...where, at that instant of connection, curiosity takes a leap into an experience beyond self. Although most experience kisses as familial embrace, an expression of love, this is something else, something beyond words, a melding of minds and bodies.

I feel art is very personal, that the act of creativity is a private and direct communication with greater knowledge, with what has been and will be – just is as it becomes a finished piece.

The materials, my old worn out and stained under shirts (part of my daily grind's costume), relegated as rags to clean up spills, until the evening before the entry deadline for this show, when, as I was cleaning up my studio, I asked myself – where is the art? What is it that I do?

The words of William Kentridge rang clear in my mind: “Art is what happens in between the things you think that you are doing.” As if casting a magic spell, or as in a biblical tale, my eyes were able to focus clearly and really see, revealing the art scattered about the studio.

Two shirts slowly rotate, lost and entangled in a heart-shaped embrace, that asks what is love, who should love, who should be loved.... Although it seems so natural and simple as your heart guides you that first time...why is whom such a big deal to some?
Stop 6
Alejandro Gutiérrez, Dreams

Most think of dreams almost as after-thoughts, of impossible ideas to fuel the child’s imagination, encouraged mostly for the purpose of having them busy themselves and leave the caretaker alone, but never expected to be realized.

Instead of being embraced, dreams are cast aside, thoughts of aspirations devoid of expectations, relegated to another realm – “you really think you can do that, silly, those are your dreams.”

To me, dreams are not what begins when we lay our heads down at the end of our “waking” day, for it is in this dream state where the “important” work begins, free of physical boundaries – the constraints of our flesh and bones.

Here is my tattered pillow case, full of ideas of what lays beyond our comprehension, where spirit and soul roam, beyond the limitations of possibility.

Stop 7
Christine Sullivan, Finger Lakes Geomorphology

This is Finger Lakes Geomorphology...

So...there was this big chunk of ice...and it was moving...and melting...and creating havoc. Then a few streams turned into eleven long and narrow lakes. Filled with fish. And there was abundant salt. And people came. And villages formed. And churches, schools and colleges. The steep hills were dotted with farms. Then grapes. It was all connected. They were all sharing the same energy. And it all happened in the blink of an eye...

Stop 8
Mark Lavatelli, Fragile Earth

This encaustic painting shows parts of a day lily and a pine tree, along with rectangles and stenciled words that allude to threats to the environment such as global warming, resulting natural disasters, and colony collapse disorder. The fragmentation of the images serves as a metaphor for the potential breakdown of ecosystems that sustain planet Earth.

Encaustic painting is an ancient and highly permanent technique in which the vehicle or binder is beeswax. Unlike linseed oil or acrylic binders which dry to harden, the beeswax is heated until molten, mixed with dry pigments to make paint, and, when applied to the painting, cools and hardens instantly. When the painting is completed, the entire surface is reheated to fuse the layers and bond them to the support. This is called burning-in, which is the literal meaning of encaustic. And, because wax is an adhesive, encaustic is an excellent medium for collage, as this painting demonstrates.
Stop 9
Tom Galambos, *Christina and Gus*

Hello. My name is Tom Galambos and my painting is entitled *Christina and Gus*.

I am interested in the unique way in which Painting parses out its content at varying rates of speed, beginning with the subject matter and continuing through the manner of execution. The latter being ultimately more captivating and urgent. Painting’s primary ability to signify is in the embedded meaning of the technical process. At its best, Painting is a reification of the intelligence of the Painter.

In my own paintings, my main concern is with their technical construction and the attending emergence of illumination within the pictorial space. These serve as an analog for the relationship between the painting and me, and the painting and the viewer. That is, the hierarchical construction of light masses are not unlike the multivalent meanings that reveal themselves to me while I work and hopefully in some way to the viewer as well.

I begin my paintings with an abstract compositional idea which evolves into imagery. In the case of this painting, I began with a flat, serpentine shape cramped in a rectangle.

The subject matter in my paintings is typically culled from what is floating at the top of my visual consciousness, which is most often my wife and children.

Stop 10
James M. Cooper, *Albert’s Park*

Hello, I'm Jim Cooper and I painted *Albert's Park*. *Albert's Park* was inspired by a community garden on East 4th Street between 2nd and 3rd Avenues in New York City. There are four major elements in the painting, a woman in a bonnet picking litter from the sidewalk, a graffitied bird on one of the buildings enclosing the garden, a t-shirt hanging on a clothesline and a face in the foliage. I used calligraphic marks to rhythmically unify the poetic imagery. That's roughly the background of the painting. Thank you.

Stop 11
J Adams, *Flora’s Offering and Plight of Ganymede*

Both of my drawing entries are influenced by stories from Greek myths. The larger line drawing, *Flora's Offering*, refers to the goddess of flowers; Flora also doubles as the goddess of fertility. She carries a magic flower which will induce pregnancy when touched. Christianity gets into the mix in the form of Adam who is walking down the hill on the right on a hot summer’s day to pick up his newspaper, where an apple awaits him. There is more to tell but too little time.

*Plight of Ganymede*, my second entry refers to the rape of Ganymede. There is a marvelous painting by Rembrandt on this subject which is worth checking out. Pluto turned himself into an eagle, which, in my drawing, is replaced by butterflies and spiders pulling Ganymede back down to earth.
Stop 12  
Nicholas H. Ruth, *Here’s Looking at You*  

This is Nick Ruth, and I am going to speak about my piece, *Here’s Looking at You*.

In my work, I am interested in exploring how something can be more than one thing at the same time. In *Here’s Looking at You*, an important part of what I am playing with is making a picture that has both a real illusion of depth and yet also elements of flatness. This juxtaposition creates a visual tension that I hope makes the image more compelling to view.

This visual paradox parallels the content of the picture. While the color verges on being pretty, the cellphone tower is a symbol of both communication and surveillance, and the rising moon and hole in the ground beg the question: just who is watching whom?

Stop 13  
Nicholas H. Ruth, *Just the Two of Us*  

This is Nick Ruth, and I’m going to talk about my piece, *Just the Two of Us*.

*Just the Two of Us* is a playful look at the darker side of our fascination with technology. One symbol of rapid technological change is the relatively recent appearance of cellphone towers and satellite dishes. In my picture, two cellphone towers act as characters in an almost intimate dialog, but also represent the transmission and reception of thousands of conversations by thousands of people. Has the greater ease and speed of communication really brought us closer together?

Much of what I am trying to do is to make something beautiful, something you want to keep looking at. For me, this beauty is a delicately balanced tension, between cheerful color and a mostly barren landscape, and between awe at what we can make and ambivalence about what we do with it.

Stop 14  
Alejandro Gutiérrez, *Copy*  

With slight variations, this hand gesture is a universal symbol of expression – like money, which the US Supreme Court agrees, it speaks. And so, this momentary gesture of my hand placed on the Xerox machine late one night becomes my response to the current state of affairs in the art world and the tastemakers: the gallerists, curators and collectors who, with their barrels of money, determine what is and what is not “valuable” as art.

It is money that allows all out theft of creative ideas under the guise of “appropriation” without compensation or even justification. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder of the cash. The artist’s role in the creation of art with value is secondary, although the name still needs to be associated with the commodities to be traded.
Richard Prince, “Dick,” took images that he commented on Instagram, sent them off to his printers and Gagosian sells them for $90,000 a pop. Dick easily monetizes someone else’s creativity – it is his eye, upon seeing something creative, that infuses the images that someone else envisioned with value, and hence “creates” art.

Emboldened after winning a lawsuit that temporarily stopped the sale, and threatened the destruction, of 5 one million-dollar pieces. There, Dick threw blue paint on blown-up prints Richard Cariou’s photographs of Rastafarians. What’s most troubling about Dick’s victory, is that it now appears that Dick didn't even need to do that, as there is no need for the appropriator to “transform” the original images.

The Xerox machine revolutionized document duplication. It turned the printing business on its head by allowing artists, writers, punks, and poets to easily and affordably publish their original works, but being a double-edged sword, it also allowed anyone to copy anything. Since then, computers and digital duplication have rapidly accelerated that process.

Money is what creates art of value…all the while I thought it was good art that created that value, the silly but indelible impression formed when I sold my first drawings of money at five-years old.

Stop 15
Illa Loeb, Carousel and Let There Be

These two pieces are parts of the Departure series, which I consider a breakthrough series. When I began, I was looking at Jim Dine’s hearts, luscious amalgams of color which captured the wild and crazy spirit of the 60s. He took the rainbow and he splashed it out beyond our imagination.

Each of the works in this series began as an elementary way to use color. As they progressed, the drawings became more and more complex. In Carousel, planes of color were superimposed one upon the other; in Let There Be, light became clouds, and color rained down.

The main material I used, the oil crayons, allowed me to push beyond what I imagined. They allowed me to relish a color, to feel its intensity and vibrancy, and then to reach for the beauty in every shape.

I am grateful for the teachers at the Vermont Studio Center and Johnson State College where I completed my MFA last year. They expected more, as all fine teachers do. I am especially honored to participate in this wonderful Finger Lakes show.
Stop 16  
William Keyser, *Fetch*

I’m William Keyser, and the sculpture is titled *Fetch*. It started with a remnant, in this case a recycled glass “brick” that I found appealing, and that seemed to have potential. The resulting sculpture examines the physical trajectory of the wooden form moving through space, and how it reacts when it encounters the glass form.

I find inspiration in architecture, recycling centers, yoga, calligraphy, jazz, remnants of all kinds, and in the last piece I did. The title *Fetch* came afterwards when the sculpture reminded me of the relationship between a dog and its bone.

I try hard to surprise myself, to have fun and to go where I’ve never been.

Stop 17  
William Keyser, *Black Ice*

I’m William Keyser and this sculpture is titled *Black Ice*. It started with a remnant, in this case a recycled glass “brick” that I found appealing, and that seemed to have potential. The resulting sculpture examines the physical trajectory of the wooden form moving through space, and how it reacts when it encounters the glass form.

I find inspiration in architecture, recycling centers, yoga, calligraphy, jazz, remnants of all kinds, and in the last piece I did. The title *Black Ice* came afterwards. The sculpture, poised on the fragile edge of the glass element, suggested the precarious situation of an object encountering that natural phenomenon of invisible danger.

I try hard to surprise myself, to have fun and to go where I’ve never been.

Stop 18  
Lanna Pejovic, *The Listener II*

This painting is part of a series I have been working on whose primary motif is an arch of trees over a pathway. There is a place like this where I walk often in Mendon Ponds Park and I always think how similar it is to the structure of cathedrals. I have emphasized this connection to architecture by simplifying the essential structure to focus the viewer inward.

The title came to me courtesy of a Wallace Stevens poem that I like very much called “The Snow Man.” The last stanza of the poem is as follows:

“......for the listener who listens in the snow,  
and, nothing himself,  
beholds nothing that is not there  
and the nothing that is.”
Stop 19
Ben Altman, Auschwitz II—Birkenau Death Camp, Oświęcim, Poland; Cenotaph for the Atomic Bomb Victims, Hiroshima, Japan; and National September 11 Memorial and Museum, New York, USA

Hello, I’m Ben Altman. Thanks for your interest in my three photographs, which are from Auschwitz-Birkenau, Hiroshima, and the World Trade Center. They are part of Site/Sight – one of a linked group of projects reflecting on violent turning points and how those histories live with us today.

I’ve visited over thirty memorials and museums dedicated to brutal events. These places vary enormously, from elaborate to inconspicuous. But visitors photograph all of them – almost automatically raising their smartphones and cameras. I photograph this photography using a newspaperman’s camera from the 1940s, which fits well with looking at the present in terms of the past. My subjects are mostly unaware of my intention.

Often places of burial, these sites attempt to preserve memory, and also to provide records, education, and closure. Like photographs they may provide incomplete information and invite prurient interest; they offer engagement but also obstruct it.

I group the photographs to suggest conversations – between histories, locations, and styles of commemoration.

Stop 20
Barbara McPhail, Neighborhood Fires

The monotype Neighborhood Fires is part of an anti-fracking series that I have been exploring since 2010. The image tells the story of a home explosion from natural gas leakage and build up due to local hydrofracking, and is based on actual events. An assault on land and air from extensive gas drilling is revealed in the foreground and background. A count of the home occupants is found in the shadow of the clothesline. Symbolically, fire is both a positive and negative force in our world and in the human personality, and is used here to represent that duality.

Stop 21
Barbara McPhail, Where Once Was Ice

This monotype was created in sections partly as a method of working larger, and partly to symbolize the breaking apart of the massive polar ice fields. The image responds to the current environmental urgency, but also to formidable ‘cold’ human personality traits that are often aligned with greed and lack of compassion. The aurora borealis, considered majestically beautiful, is a symbol of doom in some Artic cultures and a symbol of hope and plenty in others. In this way it reflects the contrast found in the response to the scientific information available on climate change.
Stop 22
Kate Timm, *Spring Flowers, Jellybeans*

The still life paintings are composed in my studio in Sterling, New York. The objects are collectibles from antique shops and yard sales, flowers from local vendors and from my gardens, as well as items loaned by friends and family. The selection of the items included in the work establishes the groundwork for the subject of each painting. Energy is created by the use of vibrant colors, varied forms and shapes, and the flow of light throughout the work. The complexity of the image and the inclusion of contemporary genre – like a bag of jellybeans and spring flowers – encourage the viewer to return to the painting again and again; finding more in the image than at first glance, and seeing the beauty and life of everyday objects.

Stop 23
Sheldon Berlyn, *Harlequin 2014*

Hello, I am Sheldon Berlyn and my painting is *Harlequin 2014*.

I am an abstract painter whose work is strongly informed by American Abstract Expressionism, notably the work of Willem de Kooning and by color theorist and painter Josef Albers. Having experimented for years within an abstract idiom, I found my own voice in what I feel is a personal form of contemporary painting. The forms in my work reference “human kinetic movement,” specifically that of dancers and athletes. The art forms of dance, theater, and athletics produces a great variety of human poses, gestures and movements which inspire my interpretations in color, light and form. My work method is to lay a canvas or a sheet of paper on a flat surface, to pour paint onto the surface in various patterns and to work “squeegees,” which I have made, through the paint in swirling motions. The object is to produce a bold, colorful series of directional and inter-acting forms which engages the viewer in suggesting a dramatic and ordered “Neo-Baroque” composition. I invite the viewer to bring his or her experience in life and art to my work and hopefully to identify with it.

Stop 24
John Vincent Kastner, *Boxed Sun with Fries and Assorted Captions*

This is *Boxed Sun with Fries and Assorted Captions*, painted by John Kastner. It is my anguished cry against the fouling of a perfectly beautiful planet by my favorite species. We need to stop eating our children.

Stop 25
John Vincent Kastner, *I Had A Car Like That Once*

Hi, my name is John Kastner. You are looking at *I Had A Car Like That Once*. Nothing profound here, just the contents of my runaway brain while sitting at a traffic light...pure entertainment. Enjoy, but watch out for the nuns.
Stop 26
Jessica Warner, *It Went This Way…*

My name is Jessica Warner. This painting is called *It Went This Way…*

In this painting and most of my work, I began with a group of objects. Even though I’m looking at a small still life, as I work, the painting unfolds into deeper spaces, becoming more like landscapes.

The objects are just a starting point. They suggest new connections and relationships. This allows the work to develop into something often ambiguous that implies narratives without defining a specific story.

I’m interested in the process of seeing, in what I can find in examining the relationships between objects and spaces and the changing narrative that results from this process.

Stop 27
Christopher Davis Cameron, *Scottsville Treeline*

Hello. My name is Chris Davis Cameron. I’m from Rochester, New York. The title of my painting is *Scottsville Treeline*. This is an oil painting, painted on plastered burlap, primed with Kilz oil-based primer. The painting is on a hand built support constructed mostly from found and repurposed materials. To be more specific I used wood found in my garage for the frame, corrugated cardboard panel from a bar stool delivery box for the underlayment and an old coffee bean bag for the burlap covering.

The subject matter is from a farm scene out in Scottsville, New York where my wife and daughter and I went pumpkin picking last fall. I refer to this painting as a decorated construction project, but I guess you could call it an Abstract Landscape painting.

I hope you like it. Enjoy the show and have a great day. Thanks for listening.

Stop 28
Paolo Marino, *This New Dawn*

My name is Paolo Marino, and you are looking at *This New Dawn*.

It is a woodcut that I made two years ago as a part of a series of narratives that attempted to take events in my life and place them within a sort of primeval world. The point was to try and see if there was a way to expose the timeless and universal qualities of my own personal experience. It is essentially a self-portrait, although, the characters identities are left ambiguous. I think of them more as impressions of emotional states, not being defined by their bodies, but by their actions.

Ultimately, I can only ask you as the viewer to interpret the series of events for yourself; as all of the images are drawn from my head, and are therefore expressions of my imagination.
Stop 29  
Belinda Bryce, *Urban Interior*

I am interested in the visual juxtaposition of the intuitive and the analytic. My images refer to a landscape that suggests interior states of mind. The painting *Urban Interior* evokes the gritty surfaces of rough walls and metal fences. As pure textures these surfaces can be beautiful but they also suggest the materiality of loss, concealing and revealing.

In the top right corner, light breaks through a black void, proposing possibility or hope. On the textured surface, markings are obscured and space is flattened. But the overall composition is rational, providing a framework of subtle strength. I am inspired by the restrained colors of nature, patterns and grids, and surfaces that suggest that what may be hidden is also part of what is there.

Stop 30  
Richard Shearer, *Letchworth*

My name is Richard Shearer and the name of this piece is *Letchworth*.  
My work is full of questions.

Sometimes I think of it as music
Sometimes like
Digging
Or putting this with that.

I work with what I don't know.

I work with forms that interest me.

Each
Painting
is unique and has its own
Trajectory and voice

It would be great to just let something be
And speak.

Wouldn't it?

That would be best.

A statement of fact:
This ground.
Who are you?

Mute,
Mute and singing.
There's a collision.

It was there all along, the chord.

What is to be found?

Feints and thrusts, veils
And cursive longing.
Also shards.

This place?

No voice, unborn, unseen.
Let it be, yet
Speak.

Stop 31
Laurence E. Keefe, J22 jib

The jib is the foresail of our J22 sailboat, and while the boat sails up to the dock we drop the jib onto the deck as we come into harbor in the evening after racing. I was standing on the foredeck looking at the stark shape of the fabric against the darkness of the water when I decided to paint this image. In my painting, attention to graphic shapes and to each detail creates an image of abstract realism. The crisp, sharp quality of the watercolor medium gives me control of the final result.

Stop 32
Kala Stein, Umbra II; Umbra VI; and Umbra VII

The definitions of umbra as given by the 1971 unabridged Merriam Webster’s Dictionary:

1. ghost or phantom
2. one that tags along with another
3. a shadow excluding all light from a given source

I am an artist. I am a designer and maker.

The vase form is central to my interest as it speaks of culture and occasion. At once, during its utilitarian function, it combines the naturally occurring wild world with the handmade object. However, the vase can also occupy space as a sculptural form, transcending mono-functionality while making an aesthetic and structural statement.

I believe in the potential of the collective and explore this notion in my work through elements of repetition and strategies of working with the multiple. Repeating elements suggest utopic order, universal beauty, and clarity of intention.
An intimate connection with material and process informs my studio practice. My desire is for optimum efficiency, and sensitivity to material qualities while nodding to craft traditions. Slip casting with plaster molds allows me to effectively produce while incorporating irregularities and variables. I intentionally reveal traces of process – the tool, the hand, and the dirt – asserting a promise for the continuum of the handmade.

Kala Stein is from Canadice, New York. Please visit the gift shop to see more of her work.

**Stop 33**  
**Kevin Schoonover, A Fair and Stately Palace**  

Hi. My name is Kevin Schoonover. My triptych is called *A Fair and Stately Palace*. It is a chromogenic photograph printed on metallic paper and mounted on wood. It shows the old Bennet School for Girls in Millbrook, New York, a girl’s “finishing school” and junior college that went bankrupt in the 1970s. It’s been empty for about forty years but neglected for far longer.

**Stop 34**  
**Willie Osterman, I Am That**  

This sculpture entitled *I Am That* is a series of in-camera self-portraits that has been inspired by a book of the same name by Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj. It is a book of his teaching about the image of self and what it means. In reading his interviews I was struck with the idea that our bodies are separate from our true spiritual beings and as we age the mechanics of our bodies will begin to “fall off like a discarded garment.”

This sculpture is an investigation into the impermanent self. It is a look at my body via an antiquated photographic process that sees metaphorically through the body and offers overlapping views of what does (and does not) make up my body. Each image is a one of a kind (or unique) glass plate photograph from the 1850s process called wet plate collodion. This is the same process used to make all the old tintypes you see or may have of your family from the mid-1800s. In this piece are thirteen individual framed shadow boxes that contain from 3-5 glass plates each. My reason for including more than one image in each box is because it gives the illusion of depth and dimension as the viewer moves. More of my work can be seen at willieosterman.com.

**Stop 35**  
**Edgar G. Praus, Store Fronts—Jackson, Mississippi**  

Aside from content, my images of storefronts employ formal concerns to evoke visual tension. I use the square format to purposefully present images in a way that is different from our traditional panoramic viewpoint. In this technological era, I choose to use traditional film and optical prints, since they match my expectations for image quality and longevity. Additionally, slapdash typography, random snippets of street signs or graffiti, and the use of hard vertical or horizontal lines either from telephone wires, intersecting street signs and pavement markings, all combine to add light touches to my work. I use a
Hasselblad Superwide camera, but without using the viewfinder, since I fully visualize the exposed negative. These images are part of an extensive series of storefronts photographed throughout the United States.